

December 19, 2024

Senior District Judge Claudia Wilken
Oakland Courthouse
1301 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94612

FILED

DEC 23 2024

CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Dear Judge Wilken:

I am writing to you as a father who is hoping that someone will listen to what has happened to my son and thousands of other student athletes like him across the country. My son's dream of playing golf for Baylor University has been crushed by what I perceive to be an ill-conceived, hastily implemented, and unnecessary change within college athletics. I am going to keep this letter short in the hopes that you actually read it.

I am a Professor and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education at Baylor University, but I am not writing to you in that capacity. I am writing to you as a father. My son, Corbin Null, is a freshman at Baylor. He spent ten years working nearly night and day to earn a scholarship to play golf at Baylor. He achieved that goal and began as a freshman on the Baylor Men's Golf team in summer 2024. Everything went just fine in the fall. In fact, he was only one or two freshmen on the team who qualified to play in a team event this fall.

Well, everything changed on November 11 when Mike McGraw, the head Men's Golf coach at Baylor, called four of the team's players into his office and told them they were being cut from the team and that they should enter the transfer portal immediately (December 1). They were told that, without such cuts, the team was going to have twelve players come June 2025, and, because of the roster caps that were proposed to be implemented as part of the House settlement, the team roster had to be reduced to nine (why the coach cut four instead of three is something of a mystery).

Needless to say, these four players were absolutely devastated. Everything they had worked for, most of them for more than a decade, was completely destroyed. My son was told that he had no future to play the sport he loves at the university he loves. The dream that he had been working toward since he was three or four years old was gone in a meeting with the coach that lasted less than six minutes.

I have been a higher education administrator for almost fifteen years. I deal with difficult student circumstances every day. I have seen hundreds of highly consequential changes implemented on university campuses. The idea that this kind of drastic change, which impacts thousands of student athletes across the country, would or could be implemented immediately is absolute insanity. I just don't understand why there is such a rush to implement the roster caps. Anything of this magnitude needs to be phased in over two or three years. What is the rush? Why is the roster cap even necessary in an age of the transfer portal? Whose idea was it to implement this kind of change so quickly? Why does nobody seem to be in charge?

I recognize there is an argument that universities don't need to be hoarding players by having an unlimited number of scholarship players, but is that even an issue in this age of the transfer portal? No player worth his or her salt is going to sit as the #4 or #5 player on a team and never play. That player is going to transfer somewhere immediately where they can get playing time. The idea that a university could hoard players just isn't a reality in this day and age of the transfer portal.

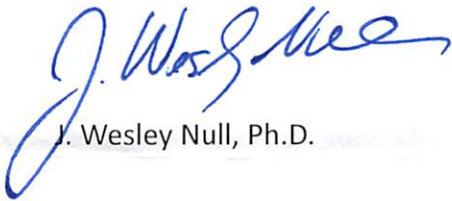
I implore you to think about the one constituent group that has absolutely been lost in this lawsuit and proposed settlement. That is the group of student athletes to whom my son belongs. These are the current college freshmen (high school class of 2024) and next year's college freshmen (class of 2025). Their dreams are being ripped out of their hands, and they have done absolutely nothing wrong. Somebody with power and courage needs to right this wrong. You appear to be the only person who can rectify the problem.

Please consider implementing a phased-in approach that allows coaches 2 to 3 years to implement these roster caps. Perhaps there is something that I don't understand about this case and how the roster caps fit in, but, as best I can tell, there is no reason that these caps cannot be phased in over a period of years. That is how changes within higher education are made.

We are talking about students' lives. We are talking about students' hopes and dreams and the future they envisioned for themselves. There is no rush to implement these roster caps. There is no legitimate problem to be solved by implementing them so quickly. In fact, I can't find a sound argument for implementing them at all, but, if they must be implemented, please tell the NCAA to phase them in over a period of years.

Thank you very much for considering these thoughts. Of course, I would be more than happy to visit on the phone or through email if that would be helpful. All of my contact information is below.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Wesley Null".

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